



## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

207 STATE HOUSE  
SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS 62706

**JB PRITZKER**  
GOVERNOR

Dear Chairman Zalewski,

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, my administration is not hesitating to take the most aggressive measures possible to protect the people of Illinois from this outbreak. Earlier this week, I issued a disaster proclamation, unlocking federal funds to combat COVID-19. Now is the time to protect the most vulnerable among us and develop strategies to mitigate the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. I am asking for the Illinois Commerce Commission's help to protect Illinoisans who might be struggling to pay their energy, water, and telecommunications bills during this time.

Attorney General Kwame Raoul and I are calling on the ICC to take action on coronavirus by initiating an emergency proceeding on a moratorium on shutoffs for all utility companies across Illinois, including investor-owned utilities, municipal cooperatives, and water companies. Preventing shutoffs is imperative as the state and nation navigate the uncertainties of COVID-19. Utility companies must postpone disconnections for all customers during this crisis, and I am asking that this moratorium remain in place until I announce the end of the COVID-19 state of emergency.

We know that Illinoisans who are sick or who have come into contact with someone with COVID-19 may be unable to go to work, and as businesses adjust to this outbreak, healthy employees could have their hours cut back. Some hourly and other low-wage working families might be unable to pay their utility bills, which could further lead to negative public health outcomes. Access to utility service will help slow the spread of the disease and protect the public. Illinoisans need access to water to wash their hands, and as residents are being asked to quarantine at home or distance themselves from others, home access to telecommunications and connectivity are as important as ever. The state must take immediate steps to ensure uninterrupted access to utility services continues.

I am requesting that the Commission use its authority to act quickly and help Illinoisans. Section 8-505 of the Public Utilities Act provides broad authority to the Commission in monitoring utility operations, and may, upon its own motion, require every utility to operate in such a manner as to "promote the health and safety of its employees, customers, and the public..." and to "require the performance of any other act which the health or safety of its employees, customers or the public may demand." Further, Section 8-508 provides that the Commission has the power to "regulate the



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furnishing of service... whenever and to the extent such action is required by the convenience and necessity of the public during time of ... emergency.” The current outbreak of COVID-19 is such an emergency and demands the power of the Commission to promote the health and safety of the public.

Importantly, we are also calling on the Commission to require public utilities to adopt revised and more flexible credit and collections procedures while the disaster declaration is in effect to ensure that homes remain connected to essential utility networks until the emergency status ends. It is critical that customers are not saddled with utility debt because of COVID-19.

I am urging you and the Commission to respond to this request within 14 days. Please reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JB Pritzker", written in a stylized, cursive script.

Governor JB Pritzker